A

SERMON

PREACH'D

At St. *Michan*'s Church in *Dublin*,

February the 23*d* 1700.

Upon Receiving into the Communion of the Church of *England*, The Honble Sir *Terence Mac-mahon*, K^nt & Bar^net and *Chriſtopher Dunn*,

CONVERTS

From the CHURCH of

ROME.

Wherein is an Account alſo of a late Controverſie, betwixt the Author and ſome Romaniſts.

By **John Clayton**, Præbendary of St. *Michan*'s.

DUBLIN:

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To His GRACE

NARCISSUS

Lord ARCH-BISHOP

OF

DUBLIN.

My Lord,

I Preſume to Dedicate This to Your Grace, upon many Accounts. As having receiv-ed my Firſt Education, at the Univerſity of *Oxford*, under Your Lordſhip's Care; and am now again Happy, in having Your Grace for my Metrapolitan. It was Your Lordſhip, that did me the Singular Honour, to recom-mend Sir *Terence Mac-mahon* to my Inſtruction, when my Lord *Inchiquin* brought him to Your Grace.

Grace. And it is Your Lordſhip's Great Learning, that can beſt Protect, Aid, and Aſſiſt Me, and Secure the Cauſe that it Suffer not, through my Defects, and Infirmities, if any Subtile Adverſary ſhould Aſſail me. This is Printed at the Requeſt of ſeveral Perſons of Quality, and Others that were my Auditors, and perſwade me that it may be Uſeful to the Publick; and therefore having after all, Your Lordſhip's Approbation, I could not deny to gratifie Them, when thereby alſo I might make an open acknowledgement of Your Graces Great and Manifold Favours.

Who am
Your Graces
Moſt Humble
and Devoted Servant

John Clayton.

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A SERMON

On Matth. XVI. Verſ. xviii.

And I ſay unto Thee, that Thou art Peter, *and upon this Rock I will build my Church: And the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*

I Having this Day Receiv'd into Our Church, Two Perſons, Converts from the Roman Communion, wherein they were Brought up: The Occaſion ſeems to require and claim a Diſcourſe that has ſome Reference thereto. And I do not doubt, but that it is expected from all here, that I ſhould expoſe ſome of the Errors and Falſehoods of the Romiſh Doctrine; To ſhew how reaſonable this their Renunciation is, and both to confirm them, and others, in the true Faith. But it may be fruitleſs, and in vain, to offer Rational Arguments on this Head, till one main Point be Eſtabliſh'd. As, Whether we are to be guided by Scripture, and confirm'd by the Practices of the moſt Primitive Chriſtians, and be govern'd by clear Arguments of Reaſon, deduced from thence, or no? For if I

muſt give up my Religion, and Reaſon, abſolutely and intirely to the Church of *Rome*, ſimply to be govern'd in Matters of Faith and Fundamental Doctrines, according to their Pleaſure and Directions *. Upon this Principle, That that Church is Infallible, and cannot Err. It is ſuch a Subterfuge for Error and Ignorance, as ſtops all Controverſie, and invalidates all Proofs, and the cleareſt Conviction of Reaſon. This, therefore, I take to be one of the moſt material and leading Points, and that which ought to be firſt diſcuſſed. This is as the main Fortification that ſurrounds their whole Camp; and if I can break in upon them, and force this Intrenchment, the reſt will be an eaſie Conqueſt, when we are got once within them, and come to a fair Engagement, having cut off their common Retreat and Coverture.

Indeed, the Affirmative being on their part, the Proof lies on their ſide; which ſhould be clearly, fully, and infallibly Demonſtrated by them, otherwiſe it is the moſt precarious Principle of all others; being only eſtabliſh'd on its own Authority. And according to their Tenents, it cannot be built on any other. For if this be the only Infallible Guide, and all other things Fallible; unleſs we allow the Authority of its own Aſſertion, it can have no other then a fallible Proof and Teſtimony; and

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* *This is a common Preface to the Decrees of the Councel of* Trent, Sacroſancta Oecumenica & generalis Tridentina ſynodus; in Spiritu Sancto ligitime congregata. *And then ſome of them end thus*; Quapropter cunctis Chriſti fidelibus interdicit, ne poſt hac de ijs, aliter vel credere, vel docere, vel predicare audeant, quam eſt his Decretis explicatum atq; definitum; vid. Concil. Trent Seſs. 13. *C.* 1. Seſs. 21. *C.* 1, &c.

and it follows then, that they may be deceived and miſtaken, and that their Church may not be Infallible, unleſs it demonſtrate its own veracity by a continued ſeries, of Infallible Truths.

And upon this ſcore it is, that the Controverſy enters betwixt us, about the Certainty or Incertainty of this Infallibility. Which it is requiſite to examine by ſuch matters of Fact, as may give the fulleſt demonſtration thereof, that the nature of the thing will admit.

And yet before we come to this part, they commonly take us up with ſeveral deluſive Arguments, and ſpend time about ſome Expreſſions that have a ſurpriſing Sound, as if they favour'd their Aſſertion, but when they come to the Teſt, have no reference to any ſuch matter.

We allow and hold the Scriptures to be the undoubted Word of GOD, and therefore an Infallible Word of Truth. If therefore they can prove by Scripture, an Infallibility conferr'd on their Church, it is a ſufficient Refutation as to us; nor would I Cavil about the various Contradictions it meets with, in the reſt of their Principles. For I am fairly for the Truth, and would have all Trifling laid aſide. And hereupon then, as to this point, I dare Engage the whole Body of their Clergy, and of all the Roman Party.

They uſe then Three ſorts of Arguments, brought from Scripture, to prove their Infallibility.

Either from ſuch Words, as are here contained in my Text, *that refer* (as they call it) *to the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, being conferr'd in particular on St.* Peter, *and ſo on his Succeſſors in the Church of* Rome.

Or from Words more generally ſpoken, *as* Matthew 28. 20. *And Lo! I am with you always, even unto the End of the World.* So John 14. 26. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my Name, he ſhall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* And John 16. 13. *When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth.* And ſo likewiſe the laſt Words of my Text, ſingly, and by themſelves apply'd, are brought to Chime in amongſt the reſt. *And the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.*

Or Thirdly, from a parity of Reaſon, betwixt theirs, and the Jewiſh Church, (*) which they ſay was Infallible, and would prove it from *Matth.* 23.2. Where (ſay they) for this reaſon, our Saviour commanded the People to have all ſtrict regard to *the Scribes and Phariſees, that ſat in* Moſes *Chair, all therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve, and do.* And then they urge, that the Argument holds ſtronger as to the Chriſtian Church, for now is our Faith built on more ſure, and eſtabliſh'd on better Promiſes, and on a more firm and compleat Word of Truth, according to *Hebrews* 8. 6.

To all which, our Church has given very full Anſwers, and ſhown how Mean, Trivial and Trifling a way of Arguing they Uſe. In that they wreſt the plain ſenſe of theſe Texts, to a quite different meaning, then ever was intended.

I will

(*) *This Argument the Papiſt Miſrepreſented and Repreſented makes uſe of, and ſo do moſt of their Authors:* Belarmine *urges hereupon, Exod.* 28. Jubet Dominus in Rationali Pontificis ſummi poni Doctrinam, & veritatem & *Deuteron.* 17. Qui indicabunt tibi judicij veritatem. Bel. De, Romano Pont. *L.* 4. *C.* 3.

I will indeed allow them, that if the Jewiſh Church was Infallible, then the Romiſh Church is alſo Infallible. But if the Jewiſh Shanedrim knew not, nor owned the Lord of Life, but erred in the main Article of their Faith, relating to the *Meſſias* and Crucifi'd *Chriſt*: If *Pontius Pilate* put Him to Death, at the Inſtigation of the (*a*) *Chief Prieſts and Elders*. And if *Caiaphas* (*b*) *who was that Year the High-Prieſt*, was particularly in the Conſpiracy, and Ring-leader (*c*) thereof. Let them boaſt of their Paralel Principles, and Arguments of more Validity, I ſhall take them to be what Chriſt called thoſe Scribes & Phariſees, but (*d*) *Blind-Guides*, and Men of the worſt Principles, *Blind, Leaders of the Blind*. And that *it will be more tollerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah *in the Day of Judgment, then for them.*

(*a*) *Matth.* 28. 12. 22.
(*b*) *John* 11. 49.
(*c*) *Matth.* 26. 3, 57.
(*d*) *Matth.* 15. 14. 23. 16.

And Secondly, Then as to thoſe general Promiſes they inſtance in by thoſe ſeveral Texts of Scripture before cited, they prove nothing againſt us, if they were allow'd to refer to this matter: For being ſpoke indefinitely to the Church diffuſive, there would be nothing determined thereby, but the Controverſy would ſtill remain. Whether our Church? or their Church? or ſome other amongſt the various Sects in the World? were thus Infallible? Theſe were Promiſes made to all the Apoſtles at large, to St. *James*, and St. *John*, as well as to St. *Peter*, that he would give them the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Ghoſt, to reveal to them all neceſſary Truths, for the Eſtabliſhment of his Church, which afterwards he would accordingly preſerve to the end of the World, ſo as that it ſhould never ceaſe to be a Church, that there ſhould never ceaſe to be a true

Chriſtian

Christian Church here on Earth. But there is no Promise that does Import, that he would preserve it from all Errors, so as to render it Infallible. The truth of these Revelations, and of Christ's Church is preserved; and I doubt not hereupon, but it will be preserved to the end of the World, in the Scriptures and Apostles Creed, and so forth, and in a certain number of faithful People, that shall hold and stand firm in that Faith, throughout all Ages. And so in the darkest times of Ignorance, * which was when Popery was most prevalent, there were still a Remnant of God's People, of whom it might be said, as of those of old, when there were a *Remnant of several Thousands left that bow'd not the Knee to* Baal, which latent numbers of Orthodox were the true visible Church on Earth; and St. *Paul* makes application of this Text, 1 *Kings* 19. 18. to the same use, *Rom.* 11. 4.

* *About the* 10th *Century called* Sæculum Obscurum.

Therefore to come to the Third sort of Proofs, whereby they would prove a particular and singular Grant, Assigned by Christ to St. *Peter*, and to his Successors of the Church of *Rome*. This, indeed, if it could be made clear, would be to the purpose. But there are a great many Propositions and Parts contain'd herein; that if Critically Examin'd, would more than puzzle them to make out. But taken in gross they are so confused, and fluctuate so very strangely in their Opinions, and Assertions, as to this matter, that there is no fixing of them, or binding of them to be Determin'd thereby.

My Text is one of the strongest of this Nature that they produce, which therefore I shall Answer. And for this I need not particularly Expound the Words

Words. For at once I ſhall give a plain Anſwer to all that can be ſaid on this Text, and all others they produce of the like nature.

For theſe Words muſt be either ſpoke directly to St. *Peter* in particular, or elſe to all the Apoſtles in general. If to all the Apoſtles, then according to this Interpretation, all the Apoſtles, and all their * Succeſſors, have an equal pretence to Infallibility, as St. *Peter*, and his Succeſſors have. Which confounds their Notion, and the grand Authority of their Church, which therefore they will not allow. Therefore on the other Hand, if theſe Words were directed to St. *Peter* in particular, then the Pope of himſelf muſt be Infallible, without the aſſiſtance of a Councel, which is contrary to the Tenents of all the Perſons of the Romiſh Church I meet with; for they utterly deny it, and when they can be got to declare themſelves on this Head, they ſay, it is the Pope, together with his Councel that is Infallible, but not otherwiſe.

And

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* Summa poteſtas Eccleſiaſtica non ſolum data eſt Petro, ſed etiam alijs Apoſtolis Bellarmin De. Rom. Pontif. *L.* 1. *C.* 9. Omnes fuerunt Capita & Paſtores Univerſæ Eccleſiæ, Ibid. *C.* 11. *But then he adds.* Sed Petro data eſt ut Ordinario Paſtori cui perpetuò ſuccederetur; aliis tanquam delegatis quibus non ſuccederetur. Fuit enim in illis Eccleſiæ primordiis neceſſarium ad fidem toto Orbe Terrarum celeriter diſſeminandam, ut primis prædicatoribus & Eccleſiarum fundatoribus ſumma poteſtas, & libertas concederetur Mortuis autem Apoſtolis, Apoſtolica authoritas in ſolo Petri ſucceſſore permanſit. *This is Anſwered by the Biſhop of* Granada, *and the Biſhop of* Paris, *when the ſame was urged in the Councel of* Trent. *That it was an Audacious Saying without Ground, Authority, or Reaſon, Invented about* 50 *Years before by* Cajetan, *to obtain a Cardinals Cap, but had been Ignominiouſly Cenſured by the Divines of the* Sorbon *ſince, and was unknown to former Ages, being inconſiſtent with the* 20th *of* Matth. Verſ. 20. vid. *Hiſt. Council of* Trent, *by* Pietro Polano, Octob. 13. 1562.

And hereupon it is, That they rarely put ſtreſs on any Scripture Proofs as to this point, but flie moſtly to Tradition, as giving them the largeſt Scope, and being moſt beyond the Capacity of the Vulgar. And for which they can bring a company of their own Forgeries and Authors, and ſo never want a Proof. So far at leaſt as to invert the Order of Diſpute, and like ſubtle Attorneys, to make us become Plantiffs inſtead of Defendants. Yet our Caſe is ſo Plain and Good, that we never refuſe thus to joyn Iſſue, if ſo that they will but firſt fix their Principle, and declare where it is, that they place this Infallibility.

And hereupon, in a late Diſpute, that I might not ſpend time in vain Proofs, I deſired that they would lay down ſome ſingle poſitive Aſſertion as to this Infallibility, which accordingly was done. *That they held the Pope and Council together to be Infallible.*

Hereupon I made this Poſition. That if I then proved one Pope and Council had made final Decrees in Fundamentals of Faith, and that other Popes and Councils with as full Authority had decreed the direct contrary, as to the ſaid Fundamentals of Faith and Doctrine, it muſt be notorious that one of them had Erred, and the Notion of Infallibility be deſtroyed and proved falſe. This was allowed, and agreed to, and this I the rather undertook, becauſe it utterly deſtroys Infallibility, wherever it be be placed. Whether in the Pope ſolely, or in the Council ſolely, or in the Pope and Council conjunctly.

And

And hereupon I drew up the following Instances in Writing, and gave them to be shown to their Priests, or to whoever would undertake to Answer them.

My first Instance was in the *Constantinopolitan* Council, held by Pope *Vigilius*, the Account whereof briefly is this. The *Nestorian* Heresie that deny'd Christ to be God, being revived by *Theodorus*, Bishop of *Mopsvestia*; and by *Theodoret*, Bishop of *Cyrus*, against *Cyril*; and in the Epistle of *Ibas*, Bishop of *Edessa* to *Maris*; which were called the Three Chapters; Fierce Disputes arose in the Church, whereupon the Emperor called a Council to *Constantinople* to settle this Affair; but Pope *Vigilius* could not be brought over to joyn with them, but called another Council of himself, of *African*, *Illirian*, *Italian*, *and other Western Bishops*, and with extraordinary Application and Diligence they Composed a large Decree, * containing Sixty Pages in Folio, that it might in every Respect be Correspondent to the Gravity and Authority of the Pope and such a Council; and that likewise it might be Satisfactory *to the Emperour*, (*a*) *and that other Synod that was Assembled by him*; and also as it is Worded, *to the whole Catholick Church*, *as a publick Direction in Faith to them all*, calling it *a Constitution*, *a Statute*, *a Decree*, *and a Definitive Sentence*, and as such was Subscribed (*b*) by *Vigilius*

C

* *This Council is Extant at large in the* Concilia Maxima, Paris è Typographiâ Regia 1644. Tom. II.

(*a*) Quatenus habito Deo auxiliante, tractatu, definitionis nostræ, constituto die Scripto, sententiam diceremus: Ad Fratres Coepiscopos nostros, a quibus similiter de eadem causa responsum vos flagitare dixisti. Vid. *Constitutum Vigilij Papæ de tribus Capitulis.*

(*b*) Juvante Deo & per ipsius gratiam Vigilius Episcopus Sanctæ Ecclesiæ Catholicæ urbis Romæ huic Constituto nostro Subscripsi.

lius himſelf, and by all the reſt of the Biſhops and Deacons, which were as many as were in ſeveral Aſſemblies of the Grand Council of *Trent*. The Sum then of this Conſtitution, or Decree, was the Defence of the Three aforeſaid Chapters, and in effect a downright Vindication, and aſſertion of Neſtorianiſm, that (as is aforeſaid) deny'd the Divinity of our Saviour, which Hereſie had been condemned by the General Council of *Chalcedon* before, and by many Councils ſince. So that here is Pope and Council, againſt Pope and Council, making ſolemn Decrees point Blank contradictory in Matters of Faith.

Hereunto were added other Inſtances, as in Pope *Liberius*, (*a*) that confirm'd Arianiſm, and in Pope *Honorius*, (*b*) that eſtabliſh'd Monothletiſm.

That the Sacrament ſhould be receiv'd in both Kinds, was the conſtant Doctrine of the whole Church many Hundreds of Years, confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd in General by all the Popes and Councils, until thoſe late Councils of (*c*) *Conſtance*, (*d*) *Baſil* and (*e*) *Trent*. And therefore either all the Popes and General Councils, for at leaſt a (*f*) Thouſand, or Twelve (*g*) Hundred Years, Erred, or elſe later Popes and Councils Erred, and whether ſoever it be, it deſtroys Infallibility.

There

(*a*) Sozomen. Lib. 4. Cap. 14. Hierom. de Script. Eccleſ. in Fortunatiano. Epiſt. Liberij Epiſcopis Orientalibus. Liberij Epiſt. Urſacio valenti & Germano. Et ad Vincentium.

(*b*) Concil. Conſtant. General. 6. Actione 13.

(*c*) Concil. Conſt. Seſſ. 13.

(*d*) Concil. Baſil. Seſſ. 30.

(*e*) Concil. Trent. Seſſ. 21. C. 2.

(*f*) Caſſander Confut. Art. 22. P. 981.

(*g*) Card. Bona Rerum Liturg. L. 2. C. 18. P. 862.

There was a Council held at *Braga*, (*a*) about Dipping the Bread in the Wine, and ſo Adminiſtring it for the whole Communion, which Cuſtom ſome Perſons offered to introduce. But the Council Condemned this Practice, becauſe (ſay they) it is *repugnant to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and to the Cuſtom of the Church, and to the Inſtitution of Chriſt the fountain of Truth*, who gave the Cup by it ſelf, ſaying, *Drink ye all of this*: And likewiſe he took the Bread by it ſelf, ſaying, *Take, Eat*, &c. And thereupon they Anathematize, all that abrogate, or alter this Inſtitution. And the Council of (*b*) *Trent*, (*c*) *Baſil* and (*d*) *Conſtance*, command *That they be Excommunicated*,

(*a*) Habitum anno 4. Bambæ Regis tempore Adeodati Papæ A. D. 675. Aut integra Sacramenta accipiant, aut ab integris arceantur. Gelaſius Majorco & Johanni Epiſcopis, apud Ivon decret. part 2. C. 8, 9. Excommunicari illos præcipit Gelaſius Papa Microlog. Cap. 19.

(*b*) Itaq; Sancta ipſa Synodus, a Spiritu Sancto (qui Spiritus eſt Sapientiæ & intellectus. Spiritus Conſilij & pietatis) edocta, atq; ipſius Eccleſiæ judicium & Conſuetudinem ſecuta, declarat ac docet, nullo divino præcepto Laicos & Clericos non Conficientes, obligari ad Euchariſtiæ Sacramentum ſub utraq; ſpecie ſumendum: neq; ullo pacto ſalva fide dubitari poſſe, quin illis alterius ſpeciei Communio ad ſalutem ſufficiet. Nam etſi Chriſtus Dominus in ultima Cæna venerabile hoc Sacramentum in Panis & Vini ſpeciebus inſtituit & Apoſtolus tradidit. Non tamen illa inſtitutio & traditio eò tendunt, ut omnes Chriſti fideles ſtatuto Domini ad utramq; ſpeciem accipiendam adſtringantur. Concil. Trident. Seſs. 21. Cap. 1. *Whereupon ſeveral Canons were made, as*, Si quis dixerit ex Dei precepto, vel neceſſitate ſalutis, omnes & ſingulos Chriſti fideles utramq; ſpeciem ſanctiſſimi Euchariſtiæ Sacramenti ſumere debere Anathema ſit. Canon. 1.

(*c*) Nullatenus ambigendum eſt, quod non ſub ſpecie Panis Caro tantum, nec ſub ſpecie Vini Sanguis tantum, ſed ſub qualibet ſpecie eſt integer totus Chriſtus. Concil. Baſil. Seſſ. 30.

(*d*) Concilium S. Generale Conſtantienſe in Sp. Sto. legitime congregatum, declarat, decernit, & definit, quod licet Chriſtus ſub utraq; ſpecie, &c.—— Et ſimiliter, quod licet in primitivâ Eccleſia hujuſmodi Sacramentum reciperetur a fidelibus ſub utraq; ſpecie —— Tamen a Laicis tantummodo ſub ſpecie Panis ſuſcipiatur —— Qua propter

municated, who, contrary to their Decree, Exhort the People to Communicate in both kinds, of Bread and Wine, and do take upon them to Administer the Sacrament to the People after that manner, and requires, that they be treated as Hereticks, if they persist in so doing without Repentance.

The Council of (*a*) *Laodicea* excludes those Books, commonly called the Apocripha, from the Canon of Scripture. And the Canons of this Council were received into the Code (*b*) of the Universal Church, and confirm'd by the (*c*) 4th and (*d*) 6th of their General Councils, which is directly contrary to the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, settled by later Councils.

The Council of *Basil* deposed the (*e*) Pope, and condemned the Council (*f*) of *Florence*.

The

propter dicere hanc Consuetudinem, aut legem observare sit Sacrilegum aut illicitum censeri debet erroneum & pertinaciter asserentes oppositum præmissorum tanquam Hæretici arcendi sunt & graviter puniendi —— Quod nullus Presbyter sub pœna Excommunicationis, communicet populum sub utraq; specie Panis & Vini. Item ipsa Sancta Synodus decernit & declarat super ipsa materia, ut effectualiter puniant eos contra hoc decretum excedentes, qui communicando populum sub utraq; specie Panis & Vini exhortati fuerint, & sic faciendum esse docuerint, & si ad pœnitentiam redire non curaverint, animo indurato, per censuras Ecclesiasticas per eos ut Hæretici sunt coercendi. Concil. Constant. Sess. 13.

(*a*) Binius ex Baronio Not. 1. in Laodicen. Concil. Hoc Concilium antiqua nobilitate celeberrimum, Græcorum atq; Latinorum Scriptis celebri memoriæ commendatum fuit.

(*b*) Canon. de Libel. Distinct. 20. Cod. Can. Eccles. Univer.

(*c*) Concil. Chalcedon. Act. 4. Act 11. Act. 13.

(*d*) Concil. Constantinop. in Trullo. Can. 2. *And by Imperial Law of the Emperor* Justinian. Novel. 131.

(*e*) *Pope* Eugenius IV. *Constituted* Amadeus *the Duke of* Savoy *Pope*, viz. Felix V.

(*f*) Jac. Meyerus in Annalibus Flandr. Lib. 16. Basilienses & Florentium adeo nihil Concordiæ habebant, ut utrumq; alterum Synagogamq; Satanæ nominaret.

The Lateran Council under (*a*) *Leo.* 10. decreed Infallibility to be in the Pope alone, and that he had a Superiority and Supremacy in himſelf alone, above all Councils.

The Councils of (*b*) *Conſtance* and (*c*) *Baſil* decree *the Superiority of a General Council above the Pope, and that they have Authority to Decree matters of Faith without him.*

And one of their Decrees runs thus. * *That for the future every one that is to be choſen Pope, ſhall in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, with Heart, and Mouth, profeſs to God Almighty, and to bleſſed* Peter, *firmly to believe and hold, as long as he ſhall live, the Holy Catholick Faith, according to the Traditions of the Apoſtles, and the General Councils, and in particular of the General Councils of* Lateran, Lyons, Vienna, Conſtance, *and* Baſil, *and to keep that Faith, to a tittle unchanged, and to Preach, Confirm and Defend it with their Life and Blood.* And the following Popes, till after the time of *Eugenius* the IV. made this Profeſſion.

* Concil. Baſil. Seſſ. 23. 37. Conſil. Conſt. Seſſ. 39

They Decreed alſo, † That General Councils have Authority immediately from Chriſt, and that the Pope himſelf is bound, and obliged to ſtand to the Declaration and Definition of theſe Councils. And further ſays, This is a (*d*) Truth belonging to

† Concil. Baſil. Seſſ. 2.

(*a*) Seſſ. 40. habita Maij 4. Anno. Dom. 1515. Concilium Conſtantienſe ubi definit Concilium eſſe ſupra Papam, reprobatum eſt in Concilio Florentino & Lateranenſi ultimo. Bellar. de Concil. L. 1. C. 7.

(*b*) Seſſ. 45.

(*c*) Concil. Baſil Seſſ. 2. apud Binnium, Tom. 8. p. 22. Seſſ. 18. p. 55. Seſſ. 33. p. 95. Seſſ. 38. p. 101.

(*d*) Veritas fidei Catholicæ Concil. Baſil. Seſſ. 33. Cenſendus eſt hæreticus —— ſine interitu ſalutis. Idem.

to the Catholick Faith, which, who Pertinaciously resists is to be deemed a Heretick, being an Article of Faith, which cannot be neglected without the lots of Salvation. These Decrees were Esta-

* Vid. Binn. Concil. Basil. Sess. 29. Sess. 38.

blish'd by Pope * *Martin* V. and by virtue hereof *John* III. and *Benedict* XIII. were deposed, and hereby *Eugenius* IV. was made Pope.

And yet Popery, as they have newly Modell'd it, advances a third Position, that Infallibility is in the Church somewhere; which my Adversary very Candidly, to save a fruitless Search, fix'd in the Pope and Council together.

So that here are Three Positions contrary one to another about this Infallibility; and place the Infallibility where you please, there is accordingly an infallible Determination that there is no such Infallibility in any of them. For when they have said all they can on this last Point, which seems the strongest, and let them set it off with as much Pomp and Ostentation of Words as possibly they can, the aforesaid Instances can never be answer'd; and it is further manifest that this is only a Collusion and Mask to convey the Pope's Infallibility into the Hearts of the People. For when they say the Pope is Infallible, General Councils are Infallible, the Church is Infallible; it is plain they never meant to make three distinct Infallibilities, but one Infallibility, which must rest virtually in the Pope, for otherwise the Church would be always without an Infallible Guide, but when a Council sits. To evade this, they say at other times, the Church and Council is virtually in the Pope, who, by a Synechdoche, is Infallible. Then the Pope is always Infallible but when a Council sits, and hereby

hereby is a freſh occaſion given for that Flout that was paſt on the Council of *Trent*, about the Pope's ſending to them the Holy Ghoſt in a Port-Mantue. And thus there is nothing more plain, then that they Center this Infallibility in the Pope ſimply. But the Papiſt Miſ-repreſented and Repreſented * ſays, He *Believes, That the Paſtors and Prelates of his Church are Fallible.* What, without an Equivocation? Does he herein include the Pope? Honeſt Men deliver themſelves as plainly as they can poſſibly contrive, eſpecially in ſuch Matters. But this ſeems Equivocal, for otherwiſe, why does he lay the Foundation of this Infallibility on ſuch places of Scripture as my Text, and the like? For there is not one Tittle or Word that can refer to placing an Infallibility in St. *Peter* in Council only; but if their Infallibility be derived hence, and founded hereupon, it muſt be in St. *Peter* ſimply, and yet as if it were out of a Divine Preſcience, to determine ſuch Diſputes and Controverſies, and Pretenſions, the very next thing that follows, ſhows that St. *Peter* was ſo far from being Infallible, that he ſo groſly Erred, as to cauſe the ſame Gracious Lord Jeſus Chriſt to ſay within Five Verſes of my Text, unto the ſaid *Peter*, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of GOD, but thoſe that be of Men.* And ſo St. *Paul* found him in a great Error, when he met him at *Antioch*, *and withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.* And indeed he was ſo great an indulger of that Error and Faction, which the Grand Apoſtolick Council was called to Reform and Correct, that he may be ſaid to be one of the Principle Ring-leaders thereof, till God

* *In the Chap. of the Infallibility of the Church.*

Mat. 16. 23.

Gal. 2. 11.

God ſhew'd him a particular Viſion, to reveal to him his Error, a little before that Council was held. It is certain, they have been much at a loſs where to fix this Infallibility, and therefore have invented theſe ſeveral Poſitions, to place it ſometimes in the Pope, ſometimes in the Council, ſometimes in the Pope and Council, all which (I think) I have proved abſolutely Falſe, and that this Uncertainty is becauſe it is really no where.

So that the Doctrine of Infallibility, inſtead of being ſo advantagious to their Church as they pretend, is the greateſt diſtracting Principle imaginable, it is the Mother of Error, a Cloak for Ignorance, an Abuſe and Cheat, and only an Artificial Contrivance, to deceive and captivate ſilly poor Souls; and never was ſtarted, thought on, contrived or heard of in the World, for above a Thouſand Years after Chriſt's time.

This was the Purport of what I gave in Writing, and it was ſhew'd (as I underſtand) to ſeveral of the Roman Clergy in this Kingdom. And all the Anſwer that I got in ſome Months time, was, *That they were the Crabbedeſt, or Knottieſt Inſtances could have been pitch'd on, and that they had not the conveniency of Books to Anſwer them.* It was then ſent for *England*, (as I was inform'd) and after a long time came a moſt tedious Anſwer, which I could never get a Copy of. I had indeed the Peruſal of it, and made Anſwer it would be too great an Avocation for me that have ſo great a Cure, to reply to every thing I thought Faulty therein; and would too much diſtract the Diſpute, that the Concluſion would not be ſo evident. But, *If they would pitch upon any one Inſtance, that would clearly decide the Controverſie*

Controverſie, I would be bound to be Determined thereby; thereupon *the firſt Inſtance was choſen*, that I was urged to make a Reply to; that about *Vigilius*.

The Anſwer owned, That there was ſuch a Council or Aſſembly, and according a Conſtitution or Decree Extant, made by them and Vigilius, *which contain'd Erroneous Doctrines in points of Faith, but ſaid this was made when* Vigilius *was a Pſeudo-Pope.*

And gave an Hiſtorical Account of *Vigilius* out of *Platina*, or ſome of their Authors; telling how Vile a Perſon *Vigilius* was at firſt, and laid on him a load of Infamy; telling by what corrupt Dealings, and by what profane Intereſt in the Empreſs *Theodora*, he Uſurp'd the Seat of Pope *Sylverius*, and got to be Pope; during whoſe Life-time he was therefore a Pſeudo, or falſe Pope, and it was then, that he made this Decree.

I ſhall make no Reply to this Obloquie, being therein they only vomit forth their own Shame. But, *ſays the Anſwer, after* Sylverius's *Death, the Spirit of God came upon him, & he immediately receded from his former Election, till he was choſen again, and then became a true Pope, and a Holy Father of the Church.* This I ſuppoſe was added, to inſinuate what a Divine Inſpiration of Infallibility there is at the time of their Acceſſion to the Chair, when they are duely and regularly made Popes. But to be ſhort, and come to the ſtreſs of the Point in Debate; which was laid herein. *Whether this Conſtitution was made before* Sylverius's *Death, or no? That is, Whether it was made whilſt* Vigilius *was a falſe, or a true Pope?* It is a plain ſingle Point, and I will venture the whole upon it. For, *If I do not prove, that this Council was call'd, and held, and the Decree made ſeveral Years after* Sylverius's *Death, I'le turn Papiſt; if my Adverſary will but as fairly engage to turn Proteſtant,*

*Datum pridie Idus Maij imperante Domino noſtro Juſtiniano perpetuo Auguſto Anno 27. poſt Conſulatum Viri clariſſimi Anno 12. in Conſtantinopolitana Civitate.

ſtant, if I prove it very fully. * The Date then of this Decree runs thus. *Conſtituted the 14th Day of* May, *in the 27th Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord the Emperor* Juſtinian, *and in the 12th Year after the Conſulatſhip of that Renowned Man* Baſilius, *in the City of* Conſtantinople. This is Extant at the end of the Decree in the *Paris* Edition of the Councils, at large, *è Typographia Regia*, 1644. But *Binnius*, and ſome others, have purpoſely (as I ſuppoſe) omitted the Date and Subſcriptions, though they have all the reſt of the Decree at large, yet at the beginning, he has in the Margent, ſet a Note, that *Baronius* has placed this in the 553 *d.* Year of our Redemption. 13 Years after *Sylverius*'s Death.

Obſerve then here is a double date; one, that it was the 27*th* Year of *Juſtinians* Reign; the other, the 12*th* Year after *Baſilius* Conſulatſhip; and what is further remarkable, that I would have you Note, that *Baſilius* was the laſt Conſul, and ſo the Ephoca, or manner of dating is altered the Year after *Baſilius* was Conſul, for whereas before they Dated things from ſuch a Year of the Emperors Reign, and when ſuch, and ſuch Perſons, were Conſuls. They then changed the method of Dating, to ſuch a certain Year after *Baſilius* was Conſul, all which clearly denotes there could be no accidental miſtake in the Date.

Let us now ſee then what Year *Sylverius* Died, and for this I take their own great Author † *Baronius*. And he places the Death of ~~*Vigilius*~~ *Sylverius* in the 14th Year of the Emperor

† Jeſu Chriſti Annus 540. Vigilij Pap. Annus 1. Juſtiniani Imp. 14. Vitigis Reg. 4. Qui ſequitur Annus Quadrageſſimus ſupra quingenteſſimum aſcriptus faſtis reperitur conſulatu ſolius Juſtini tu addas Collegam Paulinum, Juniorem dictum. —— Quo Anno Sylverius Papa in Inſula Palmaria relegatus confectus ærumnis, conſumptuſq; inedia diem tandem clauſit

Emperor *Justinians* Reign, and in the Consulatship of *Justinus*, and *Paulinus*, who were immediate Consuls before *Basilius*.

So then, *Sylverius* Dying the 14th Year of *Justinian*, and the Date of the Constitution, being the 27th Year of *Justinian*, it is plain *Vigilius*, if ever was a true Pope, and had been so 13 Years, and so also by the other Date. For *Justinus* and *Paulinus* being Consuls the Year before *Basilius*, and the Date of the Constitution being the 12*th* Year after *Basilius* was Consul, in like manner confirms, that it was 13 Years after *Vigilius* was a Right Pope. Nothing in the World can be more plain and positive, and though I have deliver'd this in Writing above Half a Year since, I hear nothing in return, and therefore I shall not add any thing more hereto, for if I would have Enlarged, I could have shown that the greatest Share of that Story about *Vigilius*, and the *Empress*, is a late Invention of their Authors, and Historians, purposely contrived, to conceal and cloak this matter. Now Mortal Men have such Imperfect Reason, that they may be liable to Mistakes, for so only *GOD is True*, *but every Man a Liar*, that is, they are subject to Error. And therefore I do not contemn or hate any Man on that Account, if I could but think he had Candor, and a good Conscience, that he were sincere, and honest in his Principle. But when Men plainly see they are in an Error, to have them forge Untruths, for Religion's sake, to coyn New Histories, forge New Inventions to deceive themselves, and others, it is such a *Pia Fraus* or Religious Cheat, as is most Impious,

clausit extremum Duodecimo Kalendas Julij. —— Quod autem aliqui nec duos Annos ejus sedi concedunt, inde id evenisse liquet, quod absurde admodum numerent ejus sedis tempusuq; ad Vigilij intrusionem tantum, cum ipse Sylverius è sede expulsus est at vero usq; ad consummatum Martyrium semper ipsum legitimum perseverasse Pontificem. Baroni Antverpiæ ex officina Plantiniana 1603. Tom. 7.

pious, and Abominable. What a ſtrange Current there is in Men's Natures to Vice, that Men ſhould ever think to ſerve God with Falſhood, and Forgeries, and be bigotted to Principles that they themſelves Invent, for no other end, but to enſlave themſelves with all; ſuch is an unhappy Zeal. Whereas to contend for the Truth, with Candor and Honeſty, to be Zealouſly affected for Righteouſneſs with Simplicity and Singleneſs of Heart, is true Piety and Zeal, as well as hearty Religion. For God loves a Tenderneſs of Conſcience, as well as a Flaming Affection, but the Conjunction of one with the other makes the Bleſſed Temper of a Chriſtian. Let us therefore ſhew forth our Faith by our Works, for ſuch are the moſt prevalent Arguments; for the greateſt part cannot but be under jealous Apprehenſions, that we have the Truth on our ſides, if we had but the Teſtimony of good Works to Illuſtrate our Profeſſion. Let us therefore with Holy Lives, with the confounding Evidence of Moral Principles, as well as of an Orthodox Faith, endeavour to Convert and Gain many more Proſelites. For thus God may perhaps make us the Bleſſed Inſtruments of turning many to Righteouſneſs, and to the acknowledgment of the Truth. So as that they may recover themſelves out of the Snare of the Devil, and though we ſhould fail of preſerving theirs, we may be ſure to ſave our own Souls. But, *Turn Thou them O Good Lord, and then will they be Turned, Be favourable be favourable, O Lord to that People, out of Thy Great and Tender Mercy. For Thou art full of Compaſſion, Long-Suffering, and of great Pity; nor wouldſt the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he ſhould be Converted and Live. Have Mercy therefore upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks, and take from them all Ignorance, hardneſs of Heart, and contempt of Thy Word; and ſo bring them home to Thy Flock, that they may be ſaved amongſt the Remnant of the true Iſraelites, and be made one Fold under one Shepherd, Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who Liveth and Reigneth, with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, one God, World without End.* Amen.

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